

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2609

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INFO AMCONGEN ANTWERP

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 BRUSSELS 9616/1

E.O. 11652: N/

TAGS: BEXP, XB, CA

SUBJECT: COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM: PROGRESS REPORT

REF: FY 1975 COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM FOR BELGIUM

1. SUMMARY: THE COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM IS PROVING AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR ORGANIZING AND DIRECTING COMMERCIAL WORK. THE MEASUREMENT OF PROGRAM RESULTS PRESENTS PROBLEMS. PROGRESS TOWARD PROGRAM TARGETS TO DATE IS ENCOURAGING ALTHOUGH ADVERSE ECONOMIC TRENDS THREATEN TO LIMIT THE RESULTS DURING REMAINDER OF THE CCP YEAR.

2. THE GOALS PROJECTED IN THE BELGIAN COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM ASSUMED CONTINUED BUSINESS EXPANSION AND SETTLED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. WHILE THE BELGIAN ECONOMY MAINTAINED A HEALTHY LEVEL OF ACTIVITY INTO THE SUMMER, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT IT IS MOVING STEADILY INTO A PERIOD OF "STAGFLATION". UNEMPLOYMENT IS RISING WHILE INFLATION CONTINUES AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF 15 PERCENT TO 16 PERCENT. ORDERS, BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN, ARE FALLING AND BUSINESS INVESTMENT IS SLOWING. SHOULD THESE TRENDS, AS ANTICIPATED, EXTEND INTO THE COMING MONTHS, CCP GOALS WILL BE CORRESPONDINGLY AFFECTED IN THOSE

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CAMPAIGNS WHERE THE GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ARE AN

IMPORTANT FACTOR. IT IS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL STATISTICAL ASSESSMENT OF TRADE RESULTS FOR THE CCP REPORTING PERIOD.

3. EXPORT PROMOTION CAMPAIGNS

(A) CAMPAIGN #1 -- COMPUTER AND COMPUTER- RELATED PRODUCTS (STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 15, 1974)

PRIMARY ACTIVITY HAS BEEN ORGANIZING A PRODUCT DISPLAY SEMINAR IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION FEATURING COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE HELD DECEMBER 3 AT USIS LIBRARY. SEVEN US COMPANIES DISPLAYED ADVANCED PRODUCTS IN THIS FIELD AND A PANEL OF THREE EXPERTS IN THE FIELD PRESENTED A SEMINAR. A TARGET AUDIENCE OF KEY EDUCATORS AND CORPORATE TRAINING DIRECTORS ATTENDED.

A VERY SUCCESSFUL COMPUTER SOFTWARE TRADE MISSION WAS HELD IN JUNE, 1974, AS A DIRECT RESULT, A GROUP OF BELGIAN OFFICIALS IS VISITING THE US IN CONNECTION WITH A NEW COMPUTER INFORMATION CENTER WHICH WE ARE FACILITATING UNDER THE BUSINESS TRAVEL PROGRAMS.

OTHER ACTIVITY HAS BEEN A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF MINICOMPUTER SHOW AT PARIS TRADE CENTER.

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED TO DATE: FSO/FSIO- 15 MAN DAYS; FSL PROFESSIONAL - 10 MAN DAYS; CLERICAL - 10 MAN DAYS.

FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES: PRINTING AND MAILING - DOLS 242

REPRESENTATION: DOLS 200 (PAID BY INDUSTRY)

(B) CAMPAIGN #2 -- BUSINESS EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS (STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 15, 1974)

MAJOR ACTIVITY AROUND WHICH THIS CAMPAIGN WAS BASED, PARTICIPATION I BUREAU '74 SEPTEMBER 10-18, WAS CANCELLED AFTER THE PREPARATORY WORK HAD BEEN COMPLETED.

OTHER ACTIVITIES INCLUDE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS FOR BUSINESS AUTOMATION EQUIPMENT SHOW AT MILAN TRADE CENTER, SEPTEMBER, 1974, AND FOR DATA COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT SHOW AT LONDON TRADE CENTER, JANUARY, 1975.

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THE EMBASSY IS REASSESSING THIS CAMPAIGN IN LIGHT OF OTHER PROGRAM PRIORITIES.

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED TO DATE: FSO - 6 MAN DAYS; FSL PROFESSIONAL - 15 MAN DAYS; CLERICAL - 3 MAN DAYS.

NO POST TRAVEL OR REPRESENTATION EXPENDITURES.

(C) CAMPAIGN #3 -- POLLUTION CONTROL EQUIPMENT (STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 15, 1974)

FOLLOWING A SUCCESSFUL CATALOG SHOW/SEMINAR HELD IN 1973, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO PURSUE THIS PRODUCT CATEGORY, ALTHOUGH ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY SOURCES, THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THIS MARKET WILL NOT BE EXPLOITABLE FOR ANOTHER YEAR.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES HAVE INCLUDED THE PROGRAMMING IN BELGIUM OF THE EXPERIMENTAL LOW POLLUTION VEHICLE TO KEY AUDIENCES IN LIEGE, LIMBURG PROVINCE, AND BRUSSELS.

WE ARE NOW PERFORMING FURTHER RESEARCH INTO THE MOST SALEABLE CATEGORIES OF EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES IN PREPARATION FOR THE U.S. POLLUTION CONTROL EQUIPMENT TRADE MISSION SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 7-9 AND UPDATING OUR CONTACT LISTS.

WE WILL ALSO BE CONDUCTING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS FOR TRADE CENTER SHOWS IN STOCKHOLM, DECEMBER, 1974; AND FRANKFURT, APRIL, 1975.

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED: FSO/FSIO - 12 MAN DAYS; FSL PROFESSIONAL - 2 MAN DAYS CLERICAL - 1 MAN DAY.

NO POST TRAVEL OR REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENDITURES.
(D) CAMPAIGN #4 -- ELECTRONIC PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT
(STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 15, 1974)

THE PRIMARY ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED FOR THIS CAMPAIGN ARE SUPPORT FOR THREE US TRADE CENTER SHOWS IN 1975 AND PROMOTING ATTENDANCE AT ELECTRONICS TRADE SHOWS IN THE UNITED STATES.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITH BELGIAN TRADE FAIR AUTHORITIES FOR THE STAGING OF A CATALOG SHOW AT THE INTER-ELECTRONICS EXHIBIT, NOVEMBER, 1975. DEFINITE INFORMATION WILL BE FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON AS SOON AS IT IS AVAILABLE (FEBRUARY , 1975).

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED: FSO - 1 MAN DAY;
FSL PROFESSIONAL - 1 MAN DAY.
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NO POST TRAVEL OR REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENDITURES.

(E) CAMPAIGN #5 -- PROCESS CONTROL INSTRUMENTATION

(STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 15, 1974)

THE ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED FOR THE CAMPAIGN ARE ALSO
PRIMARILY SUPPORT OF US TRADE CENTER SHOWS AND PROMOTION
OF ATTENDANCE AT APPROPRIATE EXHIBITION IN THE US.

A MAJOR EFFORT IN THIS CAMPAIGN WILL BE MADE IN
SECOND HALF OF FY 1975.

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED: SO - 1/2 MAN DAY;

FSL PROFESSIONAL - 1/2 MAN DAY; CLERICAL - NONE.

NO TRAVEL OR REPRESENTATIONAL EXPENDITURES.

(F) CAMPAIGN #6 -- CONSUMER GOODS (STATUS AS OF
NOVEMBER 15, 1974)

A CONTRACT IS READY FOR SIGNATURE WITH GALERIES
ANSPACH IN BRUSSELS FOR AN IN-STORE PROMOTION IN
SPRING, 1975. STORE OFFICIALS ESTIMATE PURCHASE OF
DOLS 500,000 OF US GOODS. ENGOTIATIONS ARE CONTINUING
WITH INNOVATION-BON MARCHE ON A BI-CENTENNIAL PROMOTION
FOR FY 1976.

AN ARTICLE IS BEING PREPARED ON MARKETING CONSUMER
GOODS IN BELGIUM TO BE SUBMITTED TO COMMERCE TODAY.

THE EMBASSY IS INVESTIGATING POSSIBILITIES OF
ORGANIZING A GROUP VISIT OF BUYERS TO THE NATIONAL
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HOUSEWARES SHOW IN CHICAGO, JANUARY, 1975.

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED TO DATE: FSO - 6 MAN DAYS;

FSL PROFESSIONAL - 2 MAN DAYS; FSL CLERICAL - 1 MAN DAY.

NO POST TRAVEL OR REPRESENTATION EXPENDITURES
TO DATE.

(G) CAMPAIGN #7 -- AVIONICS (STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 15,
1974)

PRIMARY ACTIVITY IN THIS AREA HAS BEEN CLOSE

COOPERATION WITH AMERICAN SUPPLIERS AND REPRESENTATION WITH APPROPRIATE BELGIAN AUTHORITIES. THIS ACTIVITY, BY ITS NATURE, IS A CONSTANT AND CONTINUING PROCESS.

THE EMBASSY HELD A RECEPTION FOR THE US EXHIBITION AT THE FARNSBOROUGH AIR SHOW HOSTED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND ATTENDED BY KEY-END USERS OF AVIONICS IN BELGIUM.

AS EFFORTS IN THIS CAMPAIGN ARE GENERALLY DIRECTED AT INDIVIDUAL SALES, RESULTS ARE RELATIVELY EASY TO MEASURE. THE PRINCIPAL TARGET, SALES OF SIXTY GROUPS OF ELECTRONIC COUNTER MEASURES, BY A US FIRM HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, ALTHOUGH WHICH OF THREE US FIRMS WILL BE CHOSEN HAS NOT BEEN DECIDED. ACTUAL BELGIAN EXPENDITURES WILL AMOUNT TO DOLS 1.2 MILLION DURING CY 1974, DOLS 2-2.5 MILLION IN CY 1975, WITH THE REMAINDER (DOLS 20 MILLION PLUS) TO BE EXPENDED IN CY 1976.

THE EMBASSY AND MAAG HAVE ALSO FACILITATED SALES OF DOLS 950,000 OF C-130 OMEGA NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD.

CONTRACTS FOR 3-D RADAR (DOLS 3 MILLION) NEW EXECUTIVE AIRCRAFT (DOLS 3 MILLION) ARE UNDER STUDY.

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED: FSO/MAAG - 50 MAN DAYS;

FSL PROFESSIONAL - NONE; FSL CLERICAL - NONE.

REPRESENTATION EXPENDITURES: DOLS 211

(H) CAMAPGN #8 -- DIRECT INVESTMENT IN U.S.A.

(STATUS AS OF NOVEMBER 15, 1974)

FOLLOWING THE TWO "INVEST IN U.S. A." SEMINARS HELD IN BELGIUM IN FY 1973 AND FY 1974, THE EMBASSY HAS CONCENTRATED IN PROVIDING FACILITATIVE SERVICES TO BELGIAN FIRMS WITH AN ESTABLISHED INTEREST IN INVESTING IN THE UNITED STATES, AND WORKING TO SUPPORT THE STATE OFFICES IN BELGIUM SEEKING BELGIAN INVESTMENT IN THE STATES.

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ALSO, IN LINE WITH OUR ACTIVITY TARGETS, WE HAVE SOLICITED AN ARTICLE BY A LOCAL AMERICAN ATTORNEY ON THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF INVESTMENT WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN THE BELGIAN BUSINESS DAKLY, ECHO DE LA BOURSE AND DISTRIBUTED AS A DOSSIER BY USIS TO ECONOMIC WRITERS, BUSINESS LEADERS, AND BELGIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICERS. AN ADDITIONAL ARTICLE BY THE RIDA WILL APPEAR IN THE SPECIAL ECHO DE LA BOURSE SUPPLEMENT ON THE UNITED STATES.

THE CAMPAIGN MANAGER, APPEARING ON A POPULAR BELGIAN TV PROGRAM, MADE A SHORT PRESENTATION ON INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE PROPOSED MINI-CONFERENCE IN LUXEMBOURG HAS PROVED UNFEASIBLE AND WE ARE PRESENTLY EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF A MINI-PRESENTATION IN AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION IN WALLONIA.

POST RESOURCES EXPENDED TO DATE: FSO/FSIO/RIDA-

10 MAN DAYS; FSL PRROFESSIONAL - NONE : FSL CLERICAL -
4 MAN DAYS.
REPRESENTATION: DOLS 200 (RIDA)
FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES: NONE

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(I) CAMPAIGN #9 -- VISIT U.S.A. (STATUS AS OF 7/1/74)

THE PRIMARY ACTIVITY TARGET, A VISIT U.S.A. SEMINAR, IS IN AND ADVANCED PLANNING STAGE. A STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES HAS BEEN HELD AT THE EMBASSY UNDER JOINT AUSPICES OF USIS AND ECON/COMMERCIAL SECTION. THE SEMINAR HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 30, 1975, FOCUSING ON THE U.S. SOUTH. ELEVEN FIRMS HAVE TO DATE AGREED TO ACT AS CO- SPONSORS FOR THE EVENT.

A RECEPTION FOR THE DIRECTORS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH HEADQUARTERS IN BELGIUM WAS CO-HOSTED BY THE COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS AND MR. RICHARD HENRY OF USTS IN WASHINGTON. AS A RESULT, THREE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE TENTATIVE PLANS FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES OR CONGRESSES IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE EMBASSY HAS FACILITATED THE GROUP TRAVEL OF TWO ORGANIZATIONS TO THE UNITED STATES AND IS SEEKING TO ORGANIZE A GROUP VISIT OF BUYERS TO THE HOUSEWARES SHOW IN CHICAGO, JANUARY, 1975.

FIVE ARTICLES ON TOURISM IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE BEEN PLACED BY USIS, TWO OF WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED.. THREE USIS CO- PRODUCTIONS HAVE BEEN SHOWN ON BELGIAN

TELEVISION HIGH-LIGHTING AMONG OTHER THINGS, TOURISM
POSSIBILITIES IN ALASKA, THE SOUTH ILLINOIS OR CHICAGO. A PROGRAM
ON FLORIDA IS UNDER PREPARATION.

POST RESOURCE EXPENDITURES TO DATE: FSO/FSIO -
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12 MAN DAYS; FSL PROFESSIONAL - 14 MAN DAYS;
FSL CLERICAL - 2 MAN DAYS.

FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES: DOLS 225 FOR PRINTING, MAILING
AND ORGANIZATION FOR USTS RECEPTION.

4. NON- CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

THE EMBASSY'S AND ONGEN ANTWERP'S NON- CAMPAIGN
ACTIVITIES REMAINED AT A HIGH LEVEL DURING THE
REPORTING PERIOD. OUR EFFORTS TO STREAMLINE
COMMERCIAL SERVICES CONTINUE, BUT ANSWERING CORRESPONDENCE,
HANDLING TELEPHONE INQUIRIES, SERVICING BUSINESS
VISITORS, DRAFTING CERP AND OTHER REPORTS, ETC.,
CONTINUE TO OCCUPY THE MAJOR PORTION OF STAFF TIME.
DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD, THE NUMBER OF WTDR'S
PREPARED BY THE EMBASSY FELL FROM 131 TO 86 IN BRUSSELS
AND 62 TO 27 IN ANTWERP IN COMPARISON WITH THE SAME
PERIOD OF 1973 WHILE THE NUMBER OF ADS'S FELL FROM
43 TO 29. SHOULD THESE TRENDS CONTINUE WE WILL BE ABLE
TO REORIENT SIGNIFICANT LOCAL STAFF TIME TO CAMPAIGN
ACTIVITIES.

THE MAJOR NON- CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY DURING THE
REPORTING PERIOD HAS BEEN THE RESEARCH AND DRAFTING OF
A GLOBAL MARKETING RESEARCH STUDY ON FOOD PROCESSING
PACKAGING, MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT. THIS HAS TO DATE
TAKEN APPROXIMATELY 25 MAN DAYS OF OFFICER TIME AND 15
MAN DAYS OF FSL PROFESSIONAL TIME AND HAS NECESSITATED
18 OUTSIDE CALLS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.
AS THE OFFICER AND PROFESSIONAL LOCAL CONCERNED ARE KEY
PERSONNEL IN SEVERAL CAMPAIGNS, THIS HAS SIGNIFICANTLY
LIMITED OUR RESOURCES TO PURSUE CAMPAIGNS. THIS
ACTIVITY HAS BEEN VERY USEFUL, HOWEVER, AND WE PROPOSE
TO SUBSTITUTE FPP EQUIPMENT AS A CAMPAIGN TO REPLACE ONE OF OUR
PRESENT CAMPAIGNS TO ALLOW APPROPRIATE FOLLOW-UP ON THE
INFORMATION GENERATED. THIS WILL BE THE SUBJECT
OF A SEPARATE MESSAGE.

5. 5. POST COMMENT -- BASED ON ITS EXPERIENCE TO DATE, WE
BELIEVE THE CCP WILL BE A USEFUL MEANS OF MAXIMIZING
THE EFFECTIVE USE OF OUR RESOURCES. BECAUSE OF STAFF
TURN-OVER, NEWNESS OF THE PROGRAM, AND INEVITABLE
PROBLEMS ARISING IN A SHIFT FROM A FUNCTIONAL DIVISION
OF LABOR TO A CAMPAIGN/PRODUCT-ORIENTED ONE, WE ARE
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STILL IN AN EXPERIMENTAL STAGE IN THE APPLICATION OF THE CCP.

SETTING ACTIVITY GOALS, WE FIND, IS AN EXCELLENT TECHNIQUE FOR ORGANIZING STAFF TIME AND PRIORITIES; PERHAPS EVEN MORE DETAILED ACTIVITY TARGETS THAN USED IN THE CURRENT PROGRAM WOULD BE USEFUL.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM. SHARE-OF-MARKET OR PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN BELGIAN IMPORTS ARE RATHER BROAD MEASURES TO USE TO ASSESS CAMPAIGN RESULTS, AS THESE MEASURES ARE SENSITIVE TO INFLUENCES FAR BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM, I.E. GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS.

USING NEW-TO-MARKET FIRMS AS A MEASURE OF THE RESULTS OF CCP CAMPAIGNS ALSO PRESENTS PROBLEMS. THE ENTRY OF NTM FIRMS CAN BE MOST EASILY AND DIRECTLY ACHIEVED THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN BELGIAN TRADE SHOWS OR GHROUGH THE VISITS OF TRADE MISSIONS WITH NTM MEMBERS. THIS CAN ALSO BE ACHIEVED, THOUGH LESS EFFICIENTLY, THROUGH THE ADS AND TOPS PROGRAMS (ON WHICH WE LARGELY RELY). THE RESULTS OF THE LATTER MEANS CAN EVENTUALLY BE MEASURED THROUGH PERSISTENT FOLLOW-UP. THE DOLLAR RESULTS, HOWEVER, WILL REMAIN ELUSIVE ANDN QUESTIONABLE.

THE EASIEST RESULTS TO MEASURE ARE IN THOSE CASES WHERE WE WORK DIRECTLY ON INDIVIDUAL SALES, E.G. AVIONICS. THIS APPLIES, HOWEVER, ONLY TO SELECTED CAMPAIGNS. THE EMBASSY IS WORKING TO EVOLVE AN APPROPRIATE MEASURE OF OUR PROGRAM EFFORTS.

MARKET RESEARCH, IF DONE PROPERLY, IS VERY USEFUL TO OUR PROGRAM BUT EQUALLY DEMANDING ON POST RESOURCES. WE RECOMMEND THAT IN THE FUTURE, ANY MARKET STUDY OF GLOBAL MARKET RESEARCH SCOPE BE CONSIDERED AS A MAJOR CAMPAIGN WITH APPROPRIATE POST COMMERCE FOLLOW-UP AND PROMOTION.

THE NUMBER OF CAMPAIGNS INCLUDED IN THE CURRENT PROGRAM IS TOO LARGE TO ALLOT EQUAL RESOURCES TO ALL. AT THIS READING WE BELIEVE THAT WE CAN GIVE MAJOR EMPHASIS TO PERHAPS SIX CAMPAIGNS, AND SECONDARY EMPHASIS TO THREE OR FOUR OTHERS. FIRESTONE

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